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Staff Photographer | Marie Underwood

Tyler Baker, 5, poses with Santa before CMU's Holiday Hoops game against Indiana State Saturday, Dec. 2 in McGuirk Arena. Baker was there supporting his sister Madisen Wardell who plays on CMU's team.

ON THE COVER **Presentation Editor | Caroline Sharbaugh**

Photo Collage with assets by Nico Mendoza, Jenna Spanola and CMU Athletics.

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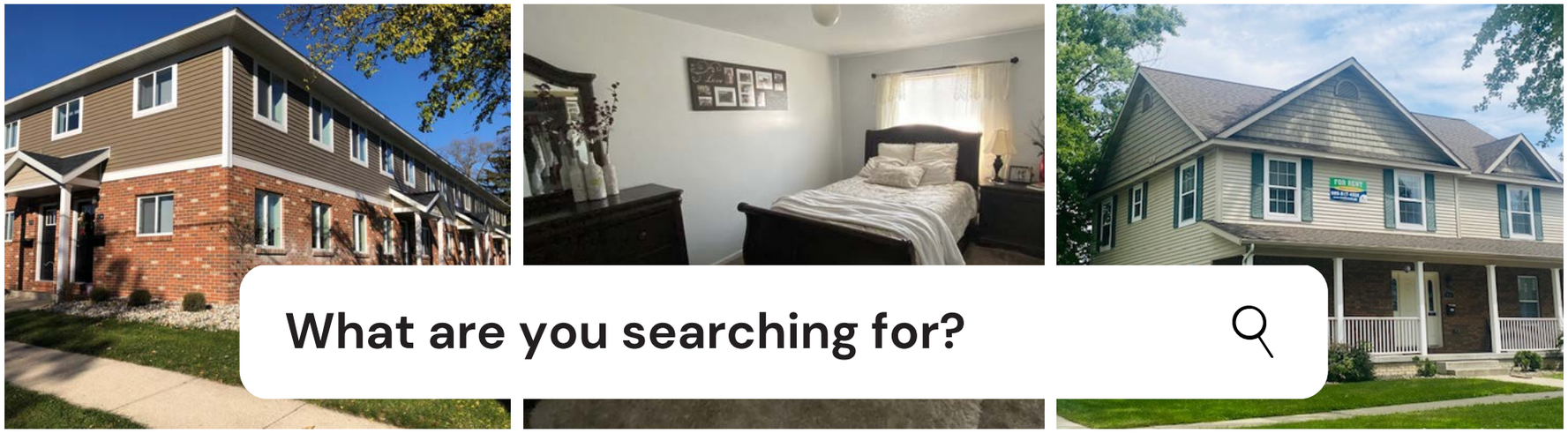

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‘She’s my balancer’

Empowerment, religion and friendship

By Kaia Zimmerman
Assistant Sports Editor

Jenna Spanola | *Staff photographer*
CMU’s Senior center Rochelle Norris, left, and forward graduate student Nadége Jean pose for a portrait, Dec. 5, in Moore Hall.

When Graduate Forward Nadége Jean and Senior Center Rochelle Norris came to Central Michigan University in the 2022-23 season as transfers, they both were looking for a new start.

Now, just a short year later, they not only have made an impact on the basketball court, but they have found a friendship that has meant the world to them.

Both Jean and Norris started their college careers in different places. Coming out of Stafford, Virginia, Norris started her career at West Virginia University (WVU) and then transferred to Virginia Tech (VT).

While she didn’t play at VT, Norris did find some playing time at WVU in her third year, averaging 3.2 points and 3.5 rebounds per game. During her career, Norris has faced injuries, which taught her a lot about mental toughness.

“When I was hurt (at WVU), I was out, but that didn’t exclude me from still doing the extra stuff (and) the extra lifts,” Norris said. “All the challenging stuff, like, it really did help my mental (health). I realized that I can handle a lot more because of what I’ve been through.”

On the other hand, Jean spent three years at Depaul, where she made 26 appearances in games. In her second year with the Blue Demons, she averaged 2.2 points and 1.4 rebounds.

“(I’ve) definitely just taken away some of the principles that they’ve instilled in me,” Jean said. “And then obviously, coming from, a bigger program, we’ve done a lot of challenging things.

“When we do stuff here ... it’s not as bad because I’ve been through worse, ... It’s just built me for this.”

How they came together

After spending most of their careers at different schools, they both felt it was right to go play at CMU.

Both said the previous coaches and the program’s history were reasons they wanted to be a Chippewa.

“For me, I will say, like, the coaches, obviously, they’re not here anymore,” Jean said. “This was gonna be the first time I had a woman as a head coach. So just that type of change was something different that I was open to.”

Coming into the program at the same time, they both said they made different friends to start.

However, after some time and long post-practice talks in the car, Jean said the two of them just “clicked.”

“Me and (Rochelle) just kind of like, attached to each other,” Jean said. “We hung out every day, and then (had) post-practice talks in the car. I feel like it’s a little easier because we are in the same position, so we kind of go through the same struggles.”

Norris said it is important for her to surround herself with people who have good morals. She said that seeing Jean as the person she is led her to want to be friends.

“(Nadége) is just a great person,” Norris said.

Helping each other on the court

As they started to build their friendship, they also started to rely on each other on the court.

To help each other through the mental

New Year's Resolution

"Gotta bring God up, of course, and have a relationship with God. Obviously, encouraging my teammates. I don't want to say a change personality, but I don't want to be stuck in the same situations that I am from last year I want to learn and grow. And then winning. And we are gonna win now (and) the rest of the season, just winning, winning in general."

Rochelle Norris

Senior Center

New Year's Resolution

"I just don't want to be the same person by the end of next year… I know a lot of my issues like I know a lot of my problems… this time I want to actually make action to do that. And winning, winning, and getting to Cleveland, you know, because we were winning.

Nadége Jean

Graduate Forward

blocks they both struggle with, they started to say a funny phrase when they mess up on the court. One of them will yell "Frankenweenies" at the other to get past the mistake.

"We kind of both had a problem, but I know… sometimes I get in my head a lot," Jean said. "So we were just like, maybe we should just come up with something really random that would just like throw each other off when we get in our heads. So I was like 'Frankenweenies.' I don't know why, it just came in my head."

Both have said that the other person is their "balancer," and they keep each other in the right headspace.

"Even when I'm talking bad about myself, (and) I'm frustrated, she's like, 'you're good, bro, like you don't suck, you're not a bad player, it's fine,'" Norris said. "When I see (Nadége), it's like positive energy. It just makes me want to be happy because it's like, 'Well shoot, she's in a good mood like what am I really upset for?'

"She really does hold me down."

For Jean, Norris is someone she looks for when she is on the court.

"If I'm not looking at Coach Jenna (Allen), I'm looking at (Rochelle), so it's just like always somebody to be like, 'you're good. It's okay,'" Jean said. "I know a lot of the times when she says stuff, it's coming from a good space. She's not saying it to be a bad person, so… it's really easy to listen to my best friend."

Having that support system in place, they both have found success on the court for the Chippewas.

In Norris' two years, she has started in 22 games, averaging 8.5 points per game while totaling 224 rebounds and 55 blocks.

In the forward position, Jean has also made an impact in her two years at CMU. She has come out of the gate strong to begin the 2023-24 season, averaging 8.7 points per game and 4.8 rebounds per game.

Growing together outside of basketball

While the friendship helps them on the court, the two also have made an impact on each other's lives outside of basketball. Norris and Jean said they are together every day, and they never stop laughing when they are around each other.

When Jean said Norris has helped her grow her relationship with God, Norris got emotional, as that is one of her goals.

"That just really touched me," Norris said about Jean's comment. "(It's) something I really am going for. It's like making sure my teammates know that, like, God has shown that they can have eternal hope and eternal salvation."

One aspect of their friendship that both of them respect is their ability to be honest and real to each other when giving advice.

"I talk to her about so much, like I go through so much, and Rochelle has always been a listening ear for me," Jean said. "Even sometimes where I feel like 'damn, I'm repeating the same thing over and over again, I'm stuck on the same situation.' I always feel like (Rochelle) is just more than open to listen to me.

"And it's not just like, being a 'yes man.' She gives me the things that I don't want to hear even though it's gonna hurt my feelings. So, it's just always having like a real person in your corner."

Their friendship also encourages them to be better people, Norris said.

"I really do need her last year up until now, because we've gone through so much on our own," Norris said. "We hold each other accountable, we work out together, we push each other to get better.

"She really makes me want to be a better person, honestly."

What's next?

As Jean and Norris continue the 2023-24 season, the two have become the leaders of a young CMU team, taking on the captain role together.

"We've been saying that a lot, 'we versus me,'" Jean said, "So, being a captain, I know, so many people look up to me that I gotta get out of my own head. … I try not to be as hard on myself, because I'm, like, I don't want other people to see that and start doing it to themselves."

"It's definitely brought me out of my comfort zone," Norris said. "I didn't talk nearly as much last year, but now I'm in a role where I have to be more assertive. And I have to say certain things even when I'm uncomfortable, but if it's to better the team, I just got to make that sacrifice."

As the captain, Jean wants to see the team continue to fight and work hard to reach its goals.

"I feel like at some point last year, we kind of all clocked out mentally, and I just want us to stay on course the whole way through this year," Jean said. "Even our coaches say they're okay if we lose, it's just how we lose."

Norris said her goal for herself is to continue to learn from everything, whether on the court or off.

"This is my last run … (I want to) take a step forward and not a step back," Norris said. "So, I say (my goal is) getting better for the team (and) for myself. You know, making sure that I'm doing the best I can for my team when we are out there, so that we can all be better together."

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From beginner to division one

By Sydney Neal
Sports Reporter

New Year's Resolution

"I want to do something great with the (MAC) conference. Then I also just (want to) grow as a player, as a student and as a person."

Kjellan Oduor
CMU Athlete

After spending his early adolescent years mostly outdoors, Kjellan (KJ) Oduor, an international student-athlete on the men's basketball team, didn't pick up a basketball until middle school. Growing up in Kisumu, Kenya, Oduor found himself playing soccer and field hockey like his father until basketball was introduced to him back in 2010.

Standing at over six feet, attention was drawn to him by his peers and coaches on his ability to play basketball. Since there were limited opportunities in Kenya for basketball, Oduor made the decision to attend high school in the United States.

When Oduor began his junior year at Spire Academy in Ohio, the captain of the basketball team wanted to get him on the team.

"He took me to the court and showed me around," Oduor said. "He gave me a ball and asked me to shoot it and I didn't know how. I tossed it up, and the crazy part is that it went in."

The captain quickly added him to the team; however, Oduor quit after the first practice. Being a 4.0 student and the valedictorian of his school, he was used to being busy academically and the idea of playing basketball seriously was foreign to him.

"The basketball here is way different than at home," Oduor said. "Everything was new like the speed and I had to adapt. I just didn't like the fit. I wanted to expand my horizons but the style they wanted me to play, I felt like I was put in a box a little bit."

After that first interaction, Oduor wasn't sure if he wanted to continue playing. It took him realizing his potential that prompted him to join the team. During his senior year, he earned a scholarship to Western Carolina University, where he redshirted and did not see the court that year. He then transferred to the College of Southern Idaho.

Oduor still had trouble adapting to the speed and the style of play as he entered his college basketball career. Unfortunately, an injury caused his career to be set back and put on pause.

"I tore my meniscus and it slowed me down," Oduor said. "The injury humbled me a little bit. I learned a lot from it, and it showed me how fast these opportunities can be taken away. I appreciate all the opportunities I get to play."

Chris McMillan, an assistant coach for the Central Michigan basketball team, previously coached at Oduor's previous college, the College of Southern Idaho which led to a chance for him to become a Chippewa this past year. As he begins the season, Oduor has seen the court for a total of 48 minutes as of Nov. 29, just shy of the Mid-American Conference opening on Jan. 2

Coming from Kenya, adjusting to Mount Pleasant has been both difficult and peaceful for Oduor, he said. On one side, adjusting to the cultural and environmental differences is a challenge; however, the nature and the small campus feels close to home for Oduor. From the social aspect to the environmental culture, it's been an adventure for him to settle in.

Courtesy photo | *CMU Athletics*

"It's a great experience to be here," Oduor said. "There are more experiences here. People get exposed to things much earlier, that's an experience that normally doesn't happen at home."

One of the biggest challenges Oduor has faced since being in the U.S. has been the lack of family time. Since coming here in 2019, he hasn't been back to his hometown.

With the time difference being eight hours ahead in Kenya, it's often hard for Oduor to find time to speak to his family over the phone. He is the second oldest of five siblings, making it hard for him to miss out on his siblings' accomplishments and growing up.

"I have to do what I have to do at times, and I have to make sacrifices," Oduor said. "When having bad days, you want someone close that you can talk to, and I don't have that luxury."

Aside from basketball, Oduor has his sights set on big academic dreams. With big dreams comes big responsibility, he said. Having to adjust to tough academics and juggling being a student-athlete has shown to be difficult.

"It's not an easy route, it's hard and it gets intense," he said. "It's hard for me right now. I have a lot of stuff on my plate and there's little-to-no free time."

With a major in pre-med, and a current 4.0 GPA, his goal is to make an impact on someone's life.

"I'm going to use basketball as a tool to achieve my dreams," Oduor said. "I want to use the connections I made here, to make a bigger impact at home."

OPINION

Going to college out-of-state, leads to much more

Ashley Birkeness

Sports Editor

October 1, 2021

There are so many factors that go into picking a place to continue your education – programs, price, people, traditions, sports and those are just a few.

In my case, it was all about location. Once I graduated high school, I was one of those teenagers that needed to go off on my own.

Did I think that I would go to a school five and a half hours away? Absolutely not. But it was the best decision I could have made for myself.

As I continue my third year at Central Michigan University, I have come to greatly appreciate my decision.

Coming from a small town in Northern Illinois, going out of state allowed me to have a clean slate.

Coming into my freshman year, not knowing anyone – including who I was going to room with – was terrifying. Thankfully, all that worry was for nothing. I didn't know it yet, but I had just met some of my best friends.

From late-night studying, staying up until 5 a.m. watching movies, even running through the parking lot of our dorm to make it to Taco Bell before it closed, they helped me see things in myself that I never saw when I was back home.

With going somewhere new and out-of-state, you get to experience all kinds of different people. Experiencing new people is part of what helps you grow as a person.

Going to a school out-of-state can be a scary thing, but there are so many groups and clubs to join that can help ease the transition. Keep your mind open for all these amazing benefits of going to a school away from home.

December 6, 2023

When I first wrote this piece, I was a staff reporter on the sports desk at *Central Michigan Life* for a month. Now, two and a half years later, here I am sitting at my desk as the Sports Editor, adding on to one of my first pieces, for it to be one of my last.

In my first version of this, I focused on why for me going to an out-of-state school was a good idea and what you can learn. But reflecting on what I wrote, it's not just about the school. It's what CMU has led me to, and that is CM Life.

Working here turned into more than gaining experience, but with that I have gotten to do things that I could never imagine.

From interviewing leaders who were a part of Title IX, season opener games, covering power five schools and even heartbreaking season enders. It has made me appreciate my career and where I am going.

When I started at CM Life, I had no idea that I was going to still be here. After my first year, I didn't know if it was for me, but with a change in leadership, I stuck it out. Now, I am in a position that I thought I would never see myself: the Sports Editor.

Not just a sports editor but the first female sports editor in over 50 years, if ever.

Last fall, then Sports Editor Sean Chase told me that I was going to be taking over and when he told me that, I laughed. He looked at me and said, "I am not kidding."

From there he trained me to take over in the spring. He believed in me; when I first started at CM Life, I would look at his articles to learn from him, so his support made me believe I could do this.

Behind him, the encouragement came from CM Life Advisor Regan Foster and then-Editor-in-Chief Aurora Abraham. They supported me, and with their guidance, I believed in myself to lead the sports desk for the next year.

There is only so many words on this page that I can fit to thank everyone but to my best friends...

Kaia Zimmerman has such a big heart, and having her by my side for the past year has meant so much to me. It's given me confidence to do this job; without her I couldn't do this.

Hadlee Peters, seeing her blossom to the person she is today from the very first day I met her has brought me so much joy. I thank CM Life for bringing us together every day.

Sydney Neal and Hunter Gudyka, thank you so much for being a part of my journey: The amount of talent you both have is endless. I can't wait to see what you guys do from here.

Zipporah Abarca has given me so much guidance this semester and it has been such an honor to be a part of her staff and her friend. The encouraging words and to be support she gives me every day means the world.

Finally, to the person I started this journey with, Megan Youngblood. She has been my rock throughout these past two years. Thank you, Megan, for showing me what strength is because you are truly the strongest person I have ever met, and you have taught me so much.

I owe so much to this organization and the people that I have met here. For the past two and half years this has been the place where I go to laugh, do homework, cry and just hangout, because that's what CM Life is. It's my safe space, my favorite place, my home.

Note to self: It'll all work out.

Comic by Caroline Sharbaugh | *Presentation Editor*

EDITORIAL: New year of conversations

CM Life's New Year's resolution: Have difficult conversations

As the clock ticks down and the people on T.V. in New York look more inebriated, you may be thinking about making a New Year's resolution a reality.

As we approach the New Year, consider what a meaningful goal looks like for your work, school and personal life.

At *Central Michigan Life*, it has long been our goal to be the voice of students, faculty and staff at Central Michigan University.

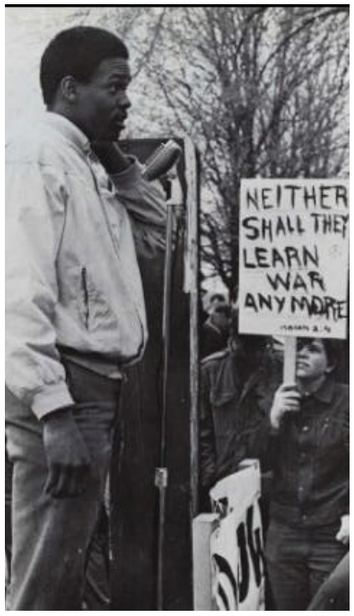
Our goal for the coming year: Have difficult conversations, and encourage others to do the same.

College campuses are made interesting by the people that are on them. The experience, knowledge and expertise make for powerful centers of learning and growth.

Think about how much learning happens outside of the classroom: students learn from talking with peers and engaging with each other.

But what about relevance?

Every day we are bombarded with information. We learn about the war between Israel and Hamas; we hear about the genocide in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; the civil war in Sudan; the Russian full-scale invasion and war in Ukraine. The list goes on.



Courtesy photos from Clarke Historical Library.

As students who are also considering things like deadlines, social survival and shifting identities, this can be too much.

The right thing to do usually isn't the easy thing, especially when the right thing to do is care.

CMU has a history of being an active campus, filled with students who care, especially during the Civil Rights and anti-war movements of the 1960s.

Dennis Adams was an editor for CM Life in 1969 and an activist on campus opposing the Vietnam war.

He recalled a candlelight vigil with several thousand students and community members setting the tone for Mount Pleasant, along with student protests in and around the former Reserve Officers' Training Corps building.

"It was ... the largest organization of protesters in this area's history for sure," Adams said. "You could look out of Warriner Hall down University Street and there were people filling the street with candles lit as far as you can see."

Their goal, he said, was to force a response from the university.

"One of the things we wanted was the university to come out in opposition to the Vietnam war, which (then-President) William Boyd ... did do after all these events had occurred," Adams said.

But it wouldn't have happened if students hadn't started the conversation.

"It was a tumultuous time on campus," Adams said. "It was sit-ins and building takeovers and students working very hard.

"The student body is the empowered group on campus, and the failure for students to recognize the power they hold has always been a problem."

He pointed out a pattern in global conflicts throughout history that can be seen in the behavior of the United States in Vietnam.

"We just dug ourselves into this quagmire that always happens when you go in and try to displace Indigenous peoples," Adams said. "And that can be applied to... our interaction with Native Americans, to what we tried to do to the Vietnamese, to what the Russians are doing to the Ukranians, and unfortunately what the Israelis are doing to the Palestinians."

There are a lot of prompts for difficult conversations. International conflicts that cost people around the world their lives cannot be ignored.

The struggles of people in our own community to escape violence, insecurity and poverty cannot be ignored.

The needs of the student body as people deserving to be respected cannot be ignored.

It all starts with a difficult conversation.

To the students of CMU: remember the change you can make. Our campus has long been a beacon of activism and change.

And it is just that: our campus.

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Congratulations, Class of 2023

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Gabrielle Christine Bicknell

Proud of our little bucket head!

Congratulations, Gabby - we love you!!

Mom, Dad, and Alex

Bailey Joseph Bostwick

Congratulations Bailey!!

We are so very proud of you! Continue to shine bright. The future is yours with arms wide open.

We love you, Mom,Dad & Brandon

Katelyn Darbyshire

We admire your passion to do your best while being of service to others.

Today your hard work and achievements are being recognized by all who love you.

Congratulations! Love, Mom, Dad and Ava

Isabella Elizabeth Derda

Isabella,

We couldn't be more proud of the brilliant, strong, and independent woman you've become.

Congratulations on this incredible milestone accomplishment!

Love, the Derda, Guinan, Renirie, and Davey families.

Maxwell Richard Henderson

Congratulations, Max!

We love you so much and we are so proud of you!

Love, Mom, Sydney and Grandma

Dylan James O'Connor

Dylan, we are so proud of you!

We have watched you grow into a strong, intelligent, compassionate young man. No matter what life throws your way, you've overcome it with grace and dignity.

There is nothing you can't do once you set your mind to it. You are going to do great things in this world!

All our Love, Mom, Dad, Derek and Meghann

Tyson Raphael Berry

There are not enough words, to express how much we love you, and so proud of all you have accomplished. Stay true to who you are, and the goals you have set for yourself. Your journey has only begun & we are excited to see you soar! Love Mom and Dad

Austin James Cody

Congratulations Austin!!

We watched you mature into an incredible young man that is ready to take on the world and could not be any more proud of you! Good luck as you start the next phase of your life and remember it's your turn to "unload the dishwasher"...

Love, Mom, Dad and Blake

Carlee Christine Corwin

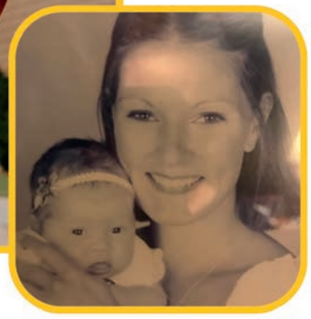
Congratulations Carlee!

We are so proud of you! Your hard work and dedication is amazing and we look forward to your continued successes in life. Your big heart will impact many and children will be lucky to have you as their teacher!

Love,
Mom, David, and Paxton

Bailey Reed Crouson

We are so very proud of you Bailey! You've worked so hard for this day, and finally get the graduation you deserve!
We love you
Love, Mom, Grampie and Kamy



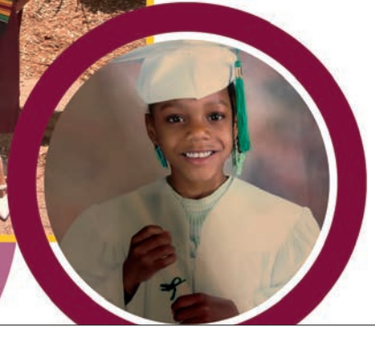
Mya Joi Durham

Our hearts swell with pride. Your achievements are a testament to your dedication.

May your future be as bright as your spirit.

Congratulations, Sweetie!!

Love, Mom, Dad, De'Eric & Sister Ken



Aracely Irmarie Garcia

Congratulations on your graduation from CMU! I'm so proud of you and everything you have accomplished so far and I can't wait to see what the future holds.

Love, Mom

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It's been quite a journey! We are so proud of you for sticking with it and making it to the finish line!

Congratulations!
Mom & Dad

Leanna Kathryn King

Words alone can not express how proud and happy we are with your accomplishment. Congratulations!

Embrace the future. Go confidently into the next chapter of your life.

Love,
Dad, Mom, and Renae

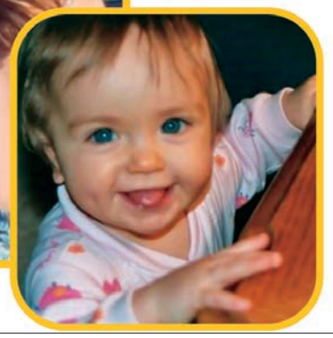
Erica Lewis

Erica.

Congratulations on your major accomplishment at CMU!! The road ahead, will have its share of obstacles, but you're incredibly ambitious and strong, and can overcome anything that comes your way.

We are very proud of you
Love,
Mom, Dad, Andrea, Caitlin, & Hunter

Kyleigh Regan Mankel



Congratulations Kyleigh!

We are all so very proud of all of your hard work and accomplishments over the past few years.

Keep chasing your dreams kiddo!

Love you! Dad and Tammy

Kailin Marie Potter

Congratulations Kailin!

We are so proud of you and all of your accomplishments! We look forward to the amazing things you will do in the future.

Love you lots,
Mom, Dad, Emma, Grant, Mia, and Lyndon

Katherine Renae Riha

Congratulations Kate! We are so proud of you and all you have accomplished so far. On to PT School and your DPT!

Love, Mom, Dad and Jake

Briana Marie Thompson

Dear Briana,
I am so proud for all that you accomplished so far. You have been an exceptional student from elementary to now. I'm sure in the coming months and years you will continue to amaze us all with many more achievements both professionally and personally. Your family wishes you the best of luck in all that you do.

Love Mom, Layla, Grandma, Auntie Tina

Battle against homelessness

Isabella County Restoration House efforts

By Renae King
Staff Reporter

In the midst of Isabella County's socioeconomic landscape, a stark reality surfaces – over a quarter of the population grapples with poverty. This issue oftentimes makes it difficult for those in the community to afford housing costs.

However, for the past 11 years, one organization has led the battle against homelessness in the community, prevailing as a beacon of security and hope and striving to make a difference in the lives of those in need.

The Isabella County Restoration House (ICRH) is a rotating homeless shelter located in downtown Mount Pleasant that helps to provide temporary shelter to those experiencing homelessness in the community. The organization also works closely alongside its community to provide its guests with food at the Isabella Community Soup Kitchen and host sites.

Aside from providing shelter and meals, the ICRH also helps to address the specific needs of its guests, such as helping them with transportation to appointments, getting them access to a primary care physician or providing education on budgeting.

Dee Obrecht, the executive director of the ICRH, said that many guests who first arrive are in "survival mode," so the organization's first goal is to make them feel at ease.

"When you're homeless, it's a traumatizing experience," she said. "They're susceptible to not just the elements, as far as cold and heat and that type of thing, but they're also susceptible to safety and security issues. And so we try to make sure that they can feel safe and secure."

According to the National Library of Medicine, "Stable housing and service programs create a sense of safety, security and stability for homeless individuals, who often face hardships in securing a safe place to sleep."

Jenna Spanola | Staff photographer
Executive Director of the Isabella County Restoration House Dee Obrecht puts wet laundry into the dryer Wednesday, Dec. 6, in downtown Mount Pleasant.

Once the ICRH can get guests to a place where they feel comfortable, she said the organization then helps to provide an environment that supports moving forward by connecting clients with the resources they need to do so.

According to the ICRH's website, there are roughly 510 homeless individuals in Mount Pleasant at any given time, 135 of which are school children without a fixed address.

However, Obrecht said it is oftentimes difficult to determine the extent of homelessness.

"It's hard to count homelessness," she said. "Especially in our community, they go to the wooded areas, the state land around here, and they tend to camp out and hide. They know they have to clear up everything when they leave for the day, so (their belongings) don't get found and destroyed or thrown out or stolen."

Jenna Spanola | Staff photographer
A table inside of the Isabella County Restoration House reflects the home's mission Wednesday, Dec. 6, in downtown Mount Pleasant.

The ICRH began its first rotational season in 2012-2013.

As a rotating shelter, the ICRH collaborates with different churches as host sites. Every week throughout the restoration house's 24-week operating period, a different host church will provide shelter, meals and support to individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

The idea for the ICRH was born out of a collective concern within the community about the lack of services for people experiencing homelessness in Isabella County. A group, including many Central Michigan University professors and local business leaders, came together to address the community's concern.

A research committee was put together to study which homeless shelter model would be the most effective for the community.

After nearly a year of researching the committee finally settled on the rotational method.

"It's probably the easiest, quickest and cheapest to get started," Obrecht said. "You don't have to buy a facility. You don't have to rent a facility. And you know, you can easily get this going with the help of some churches."

Navigating change

While the method persists, numerous changes have occurred. Initially, the shelter ran for three months, from January to March. Those seeking shelter would arrive at a check-in location, then be transported to a host church where they would eat their evening meal and stay the night. Then, in the morning, they would be transported to the community soup kitchen where they would eat breakfast and oftentimes stay until lunch.

However, this left them with additional time between when the soup kitchen closed and the check-in time began, so many were left with nothing to do for a few hours every afternoon.

In 2017, the restoration house opened a day shelter where guests could stay all day until they were dropped off at the church host to stay the night, providing a 24/7 haven for guests.

The day shelter has expanded its services to also include laundry services and showers.

The shelter now also operates from November through mid-April and has the ability to serve 30 guests each day, compared to the nine guests each night during its earliest years.

Over the past decade, Obrecht said the ICRH has served over 1,000 individuals, including 234 children, and have served roughly 26,000 meals.

Norma Bailey is a founding member of the Unitarian Univer-

New Year's Resolution

"To just see us move forward. To make the Isabella County Restoration House more stable and more permanent and providing the best services that we can."

Dee Obrecht

Executive Director of the ICRH

New Year's Resolution

"I believe that both the church (and I) would maintain our strong support of the Isabella County Restoration House in the same way that we have. Over the years, we continue to be the same support."

Norma Bailey

Member of UUFCM

salist Fellowship of Central Michigan (UUFCM), which is a partner church of the ICRH.

She said she's worked with the ICRH since the very beginning, and has been able to witness the organization's growth from when it first opened almost 11 years ago.

The UUFCM used to serve as one of the check-in locations for those experiencing homelessness.

"Our church served as what was, in a sense, the registering or gathering place," said Bailey. "So people between 4:30 and 6 p.m. (people) would come to our building and have coffee, tea, some snacks, and then at 6 o'clock, they would be taken to the church."

Over the years, the UUFCM's partnership with the ICRH has evolved. As a partner church, Bailey said volunteering is at the core of the UUFCM's support for the ICRH. Many of the church's members contribute by preparing beds at the host site, serving meals and engaging in activities with shelter guests.

Obrecht said the ICRH has roughly 32 different churches that it works with. However, not every site is large enough to house 30 guests at a time, so these congregations partner with larger churches or hosts.

The host sites provide shelter, Obrecht said, while the partnering churches provide the volunteers, services and meals.

Bailey, as well as many of the church's members, is passionate in the effort to address the homelessness issue in the community. The UUFCM's mission and values closely align with the ICRH, she said.

"One of our principles is the inherent worth and dignity of every person," she said. "So, if you believe in that, you want to do outreach to help provide that for every person.

"If you look at justice, equity and compassionate human relations, absolutely. This is what we're trying to do."

An increased need

The efforts of the ICRH have made a profound impact in the Isabella County community, yet the journey towards addressing homelessness is ongoing.

This year, Obrecht said the need for shelter has been greater, compared to previous years.

"We filled up very quickly," she said. "Usually we don't get to our maximum amount until the end of November and sometimes it's mid-December, but we got cold quick.

"Our first day we had 21 people at the shelter, and it's the first time I've been here that they were lined up at the door ready to come in."

To improve their efforts in the community, Obrecht said the organization is on the verge of launching a capital campaign to secure its own facility, enabling them to move away from the rotational model. This shift will allow the ICRH to expand its services by shifting focus and resources towards providing guests with more services.

Additionally, the organization hopes to transition from seasonal to year-round operations within the next few years.

As the organization embarks on this transformative journey, Obrecht said the Isabella County community remains vital in ensuring the ICRH can continue to provide its services. Together, Obrecht and Bailey said they strive to create a narrative of hope, compassion and commitment to making a brighter future for all.

During the 2022-2023 rotational season the ICRH served 110 people.
This includes… 10 families, 27 children, 2 expectant mothers, 57 women, and 62 men.
They have provided 1,440 meals, 309 loads of laundry, and 589 showers.
ICRH

Design by Maddie Kerbyson | Designer

Learning beyond the classroom

Nico Mendoza | Visuals Editor

Twenty one year-old Mount Pleasant resident Avery Baggett poses for a portrait, Friday, Nov. 3, at the Mount Pleasant Pride Center.

Taking a break and finding community

By Courtney Boyd
Staff Reporter

The fall semester is coming to a close at Central Michigan University. Students are working on final projects and preparing for exams. But deadlines are not the only thing creeping up on students– burnout is, too.

Avery Baggett was a CMU student who was scheduled to graduate in 2024. They had to drop out after their sophomore year due to personal issues that affected their mental health and caused academic struggles.

"I basically just gave up," they said. "It became too much."

Baggett was born in the Hunan province of China. They said they don't remember much of it. Adopted at eight months old by their white American moms, Baggett was raised in Carrollton, Georgia, until they turned 16 years old.

They said their family moved to Clio, Michigan, in 2018 to be closer to other relatives and for one mother's career advancements. They were a straight-A student in high school, and decided to attend CMU to pursue an art major.

"At the time I was trying to specifically get a graphic design degree, and then I switched to sociology because I was having trouble with the art classes," they said. "It ended up not working out for me academically, but I still do art as a hobby."

During Baggett's freshman year at CMU, their parents got a divorce. Additionally, the parent they returned to during Thanksgiving, winter and spring breaks suffered from alcoholism.

"That was really rough," Baggett said. "It just became really hard for me to do any kind of school work. I dropped what classes I could, but the ones I was still registered in, I just started ignoring the work."

Control the flame

This is just one example of what burnout can look like for students. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), burnout is defined as an occupational phenomenon defined as "a syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed."

Some of the symptoms of burnout are:

- Feelings of exhaustion
- Mental distance and negative feelings towards one's work
- Reduced efficacy

While the WHO said it refers specifically to the occupational context, academic burnout (also called academic fatigue) can exist as well, especially at the college level.

Not only do students have to balance their academic workloads, but their social lives, careers, mental health and physical health in the process. In times of high stress, one or multiple areas can become neglected.

Baggett is not alone in these struggles. Shana Dancer is a social worker who owns RedBloom Center for Community Wellness in Mount Pleasant. The business specializes in yoga, but also offers energy, healing and mental

New Year's Resolution

"Probably listen to myself more, in the sense that sometimes I just go and don't listen to my body. So I want to slow down and listen to it more and take care of myself more."

Avery Baggett
Former CMU student

health therapy services, for which Dancer is a therapist.

Dancer said clients from the ages of 18 to 25 suffer from anxiety, depression and general stress. She said this stress comes from college, peers and social media.

"At that age, people are trying to figure out who they are and where they fit in the world," she said. "There's a lot of pressure from society to figure out who they are at such a young age, and I consider that stress to be unnecessary."

Dancer said the human brain doesn't fully develop until 25 years old, which means most students enrolled in college are told to figure themselves out and work on various things when their brains aren't fully formed. She said this can include problem-solving skills as,well.

"It almost makes it even more difficult for them to navigate things when they don't even have the full capacity to do that yet," she said. "Not to say they aren't capable, some are very capable, but that doesn't make it less difficult."

While *Central Michigan Life* has published tips on balancing burnout before, Dancer also gave some tips for students to keep themselves mentally and physically healthy.

"Sometimes you have to go back to basics," she said. "It can help them (students) regain their confidence and a sense of control, even if it's something small."

Dancer said these basics are:

- Getting eight hours of sleep;
- Eating nutritious meals;
- Staying hydrated throughout the day; and
- Taking a shower.

Additionally, the CMU Counseling Center has resources for students to sign up for appointments if needed.

Find your balance

"I want to encourage people that no one has their life figured out," Dancer said. "Everyone has problems and that's okay."

Dancer also encouraged students to ask for help if they need it and to not be ashamed of doing so.

Baggett echoed that sentiment. They said the biggest aspect of CMU that stuck with them was community. Now they live with four other roommates they met while attending the university.

"The best part of it for me was finding really close friendships," they said.

Baggett also advised students to listen to their gut and take care of themselves. They said students should slow down if they need to and not be afraid if their pace is different from someone else's.

"Be around people who are struggling or who have figured it out," they said. "I think being in a place with a bunch of other people going through the same thing as you is really important to figuring yourself out."

Baggett is now enrolled at Mid Michigan College and will be starting classes in January 2024. After receiving their associate degree, they plan to move in with their best friend and pursue a music career together.

For students on campus who may be struggling with personal issues or academic stress at the end of the semester, the CMU Counseling Center offers a variety of free services. To make an appointment, you can call the office at 989-774-3381, stop by its physical office in Foust 102 or request an appointment online.

Prof. Prakash Adhikari's journey from East Asia to Central Michigan

By Lauren Pocica
Staff Reporter

Prakash Adhikari as a child fled with his family from east Nepal to Northeast India, hiking through the mountainous terrain for two days and experiencing electricity for the first time.

"When I saw a bus for the first time, I saw a giant animal with a big mouth and really big eyes making some sort of weird noise," Adhikari said. "I thought it was gonna eat me."

Adhikari is a professor of political science at Central Michigan University who specializes in teaching international relations. He is also the director of the Institute for Migration and Refugee Studies, advisor for Amnesty International Chapter at CMU, the Refugee Outreach Collective and coordinator for Global Classroom Program.

Childhood in Nepal

Adhikari wanted to gain more knowledge on forced migration, civil war and why these events occur. His experience moving from Nepal to India sparked his interest in these topics, he said.

He was born in a small village in East Nepal alongside a river in a valley surrounded by mountains.

"The river originates from the snow melting from the top of the mountains," Adhikari said. "It is just the most beautiful place."

Adhikari not only had connections and relationships with his classmates and family in his village but a connection to the environment and nature within it.

"As a kid, we would run across (the village) and climb on rocks and trees and see wild animals like monkeys," Adhikari said. "But most of all, I miss the mountains."

Visuals editor I Nico Mendoza
CMU faculty member Dr. Prakash Adhikari teaches his Introduction to International Relations (PSC150/PSC150WI), Wednesday, Dec. 12, in Anspach Hall 255.

Courtesy Photo I Prakash Adhikari
Village in Nepal- Hut where Adhikari was born

Adhikari said that despite these memories, he and his family needed to leave.

"When I was about five or six, we fled to India for two reasons," Adhikari said. "Lack of economic opportunities and political rights: Nepal did not have them."

An outsider in India

Adhikari said he was "super nervous" about making his way to India.

"I started throwing up and I got sick throughout the journey to India," Adhikari said.

He said they were traveling to Northeast India in a state called Manipur. One of the first challenges Adhikari faced after settling in Manipur was the language.

"So, in Nepal, I was speaking Nepali but when we got to India, they spoke Manipuri, which is totally different from my mother tongue," Adhikari said.

He said that made the studying at the school hard.

Adhikari said that his family was "surviving" under very bad economic conditions.

"I still remember my parents were struggling to feed us," Adhikari said. "I think I just wanted to overcome those things, but my refusal to accept the conditions I was in just motivated me even more."

He often felt like an outcast and didn't feel safe.

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"I was subject to discrimination because of the way I looked," Adhikari said. "I had to be careful every single day."

He said he was often called a 'foreigner'.

Adhikari said that the Manipur was different from the rest of India in terms of religion, culture and language. When India incorporated the state of Manipur even when they didn't want to be included, it created conflict.

"So, when they see a person who looks like an Indian they call him a foreigner," he said.

Adhikari said he had fallen victim to hatred and humiliation.

"I've been physically abused several times," Adhikari said. "It was not the most hospitable part of India for foreigners."

Adhikari had created groups for Nepali students in India to create more inclusivity and community.

"If we all came together as members of an organization, then we have a collective voice, as opposed to one person fighting against this kind of discrimination," he said.

Education to CMU

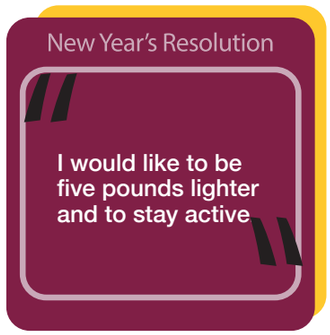
After high school, Adhikari received his bachelors in economics at North-Eastern Hill University. He then went to another state in India called Nagaland, which is where he started learning English.

From Nagaland he received his masters in economics at the Tribhuvan University. Adhikari then continued his academic career at the University of New Mexico where he received his master's in economics and his doctoral degree in political science.

He said that he appreciates the support he had throughout graduate school.

"My friendships with my cohort made my transition to grad school and American way of life very easy," Adhikari said. "I am still in touch with most of them and have co-authored research with more than one of my classmates."

He shared that his classmates tried to teach him sports.



"They tried to teach me how American football is played but gave up once they found out I was mixing up football with soccer," Adhikari said.

He also started the Nepali Student Association at the University of New Mexico for those who have similar experiences to him and to create a safe place for others.

"I think education can change people's life," Adhikari said. "I love being part of students who are learning and exploring new ways to address challenges facing the world today, such as forced migration and human rights."

After graduate school, he applied to over 100 jobs with CMU being the only interview he heard back from, starting his position at CMU in 2011.

"My path to citizenship was smooth because of my job and success as a scholar," Adhikari said.

Since then, he has become involved in several registered student organizations (RSO) on campus, including the Refugee Outreach Collective (ROC), the Amnesty International chapter and the Nepali Student Association.

He said that these organizations are very important to growing and developing as a person by learning how to gain leadership, fundraising and social skills.

Adhikari believed that education can be life-changing, therefore he was part of the creation of the Global Classroom at CMU. He made the program available to people in Malawi so individuals experiencing forced displacement in Dzaleka Refugee Camp, Malawi could continue their academic career and receive a college degree.

This program allows students to connect to one another while networking with organizers in Dzaleka and supports the economy by using resources from the camp that participants are familiar with.

"We want to give them access to college education, and with that, if they get an education they can get out of the refugee camp and start their life," Adhikari said. "That would be nice."

Without generalizing ones experience to many people, Adhikari said that his advice to others would be to understand and know what you want to accomplish, learn from your failures and stay motivated.

For more information on this story, visit WWW.CM-LIFE.COM

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Photo of the day

Rakesh Tadkal | Staff photographer

Grooving to the rhythms of tradition, the CMU Infusion Dance Team dazzles the stage at Diwali Night Saturday, Dec. 2, in the Finch Fieldhouse.

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Prepare for power outages today with a Generac Home Standby Generator. Act now to receive a FREE 7-Year warranty with qualifying purchase* Call 1-855-922-0420 today to schedule a free quote. It's not just a generator. It's a power move.

TV & INTERNET

FREE high speed internet for those that qualify. Government program for recipients of select programs incl. Medicaid, SNAP, Housing Assistance, WIC, Veterans Pension, Survivor Benefits, Lifeline, Tribal. 15 GB internet service. Bonus offer: Android tablet FREE with one-time $20 copay. Free shipping & handling. Call Maxsip Telecom today! 1-866-783-0224.

Switch to DISH and get up to a $300 gift card! Plus get the Multisport pack included for a limited time! Call for details: 1-866-950-6757.

DIRECTV Sports Pack - 3 Months on Us! Watch pro and college sports LIVE. Plus over 40 regional and specialty networks included. NFL, College Football, MLB, NBA, NHL, Golf and more. Some restrictions apply. Call DIRECTV 1-888-351-0154.

Ride for FREE!

NO FARE IS COLLECTED AT △ & ⌂ BUS STOPS

These stops are pre-paid, sponsored by our many partner organizations)

MAROON

Southpoint/Winchester	:15	:45	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Village at Bluegrass	:21	:51	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
University Meadows	:25	:55	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Union Square	:29	:59	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Target			UPON REQUEST
Music Bldg. - Lot#33	**:42**	**:12**	**EVERY 1/2 HOUR**
Washington/Ojibway	:44	:14	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Anspach/Pearce	:45	:15	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Ronan/Grawn	:47	:17	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Main St./Gaylord	:48	:18	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
MMC/DOAN CENTER			UPON REQUEST
Washington/Clayton	:05	:35	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Larzalere	:06	:36	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Wightman	:07	:37	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Park Library	:08	:38	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Music Bldg. - Lot#33	**:12**	**:42**	**EVERY 1/2 HOUR**

GOLD

SAC/McGuirk	:13	:43	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Stadium Mall			UPON REQUEST
TJ Maxx			UPON REQUEST
Walmart			UPON REQUEST
Copper Beech	:26	:56	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
The Reserve	:28	:58	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Jamestown	:30	:00	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Yorkshire Commons	:33	:03	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Music Bldg. - Lot#33	**:42**	**:12**	**EVERY 1/2 HOUR**

DEERFIELD

TOWERS @7/11	:15	:45	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Deming Edgewood	:16	:46	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Westpoint Village	:18	:48	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Deerfield Village	:20	:50	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Lexington Ridge	:25	:55	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Theunissen Stadium Lot#70	:27	:57	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Communter Lot #75	:29	:59	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
SAC/McGuirk	:30	:00	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Music Bldg. - Lot#33	**:42**	**:12**	**EVERY 1/2 HOUR**

EFFECTIVE AUGUST 2022

COMMUTER SHUTTLE:
MONDAY - FRIDAY 7:00 AM - 7:00 PM

8:00PM & 10:30PM RETURN FROM PARK LIBRARY TO APT. COMPLEXES ONLY

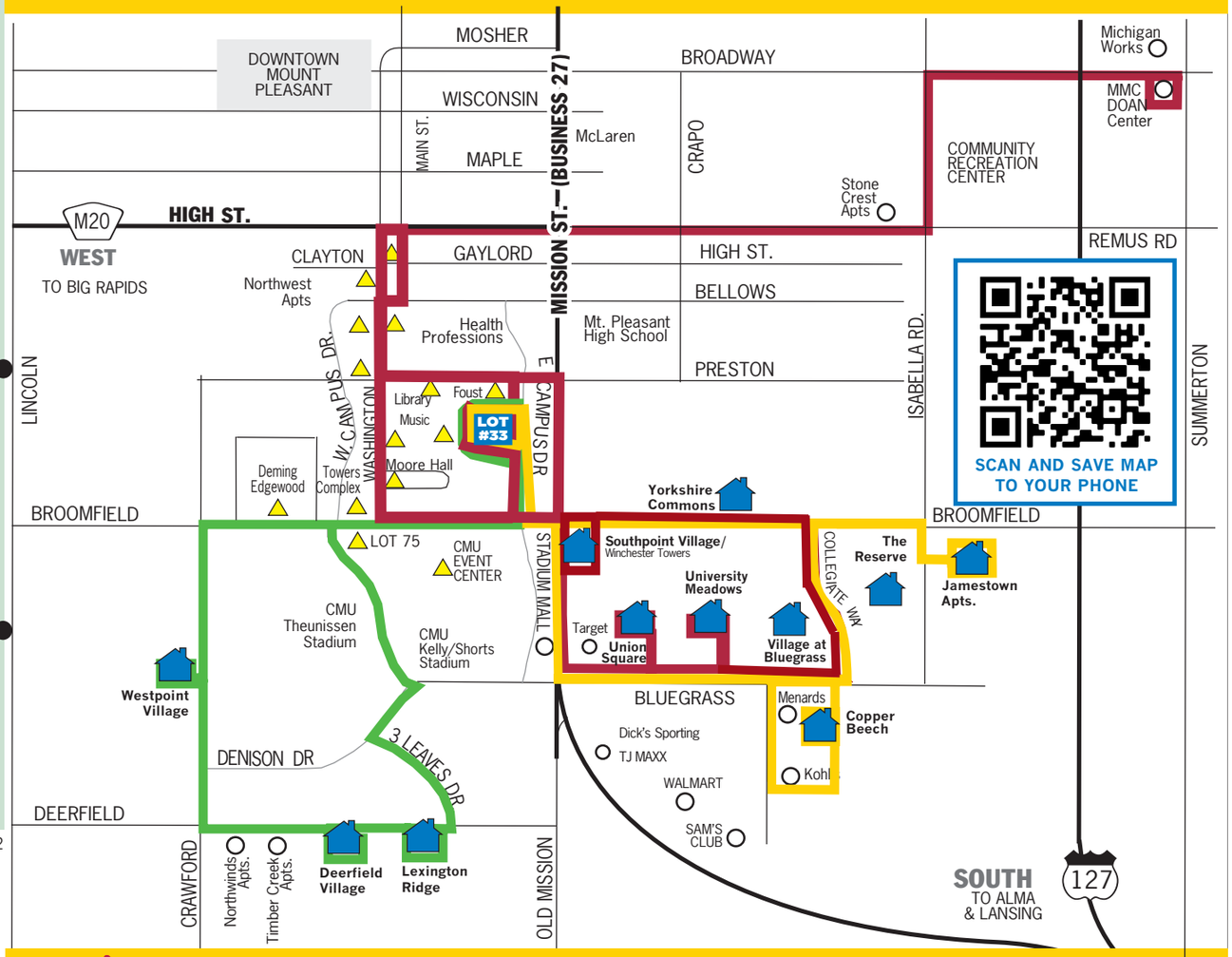
REQUEST STOPS: ○ REGULAR FARE $2.00

EVERY HALF HOUR SHUTTLE STOPS:

△ **BUS STOPS**
No fare collected/prepaid stops by contract with our partners

⌂ **APARTMENT COMPLEX STOPS**
Rides for residents prepaid by complex

COMMUTER SHUTTLE ROUTES



COMMUTER SHUTTLE OPERATES LATE AUGUST THROUGH EARLY MAY
WHEN CMU CLASSES ARE IN SESSION

BE SEEN! Step to the curb and wave

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ictcbus.com
All buses flex 1/4 mile of published route, call ahead for service

(989) 772-9441

BRINGING YOU THE BEST IN LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

JAY LENO
WITH ARSENIO HALL

FRIDAY, DECEMER 8 | 8:00PM
$56, $66, $78, $84

ROCK N' RUM
HOLIDAY BASH

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9 | 6:45PM
$50 General Admission

KENNY G
THE MIRACLES HOLIDAY & HITS TOUR

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10 | 8:00PM
$34, $46, $57 & $63

ROBIN THICKE
WITH MONTELL JORDAN

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15 | 8:00PM
$53, $63, $78, $84

SMOKEY ROBINSON

WED, DECEMBER 27 | 8:00PM
$69, $89, $102, $109

LANCE BURTON & FRIENDS

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 28 | 8:00PM
$29, $41, $52, $58

GREAT WHITE & QUIET RIOT

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 29 | 8:00PM
$26, $38, $49, $55

LONESTAR
WITH EDDIE MONTGOMERY

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30 | 8:00PM
$34, $48, $62, $68

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